

United States. The Civil War and the slavery issue had done much to divert attention from Utah; however, as Union forces drove Robert E. Lee towards Appomattox in the spring of 1865, national interest again began to focus on Utah. Polygamy and "un-American" governmental practices were the main points of contention, but almost as important was Mormon Indian policy. The 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre worked to convince the nation that the Mormon church made treaties with Indians to "destroy emigrant parties . . . who are not of their belief" and that the Intermountain West was "Swarming with Indians in the employ of the Mormons, who are taught to respect no person, unless he has a certificate signed by one of the 'Mormon Officers.'"¹²³

Incensed by such rumors, local U.S. troops commander Patrick Connor vowed to destroy the theocracy. He organized an anti-Mormon cabal and established a system of espionage complete with agents and double agents hired "for secret service."¹²⁴ Meanwhile, he sought to wean the Indians from Mormon influence by furnishing them provisions and slandering the Latter-day Saints. Throughout the period he and other representatives of the military made it clear that the U.S. Army and the Mormon church were on the verge of actual warfare, and the natives were urged to fight with the United States *when* hostilities commenced.¹²⁵ Keenly aware of Connor's influence with the Indians, church leaders declared that the likelihood of war with the natives was not "in existence until [Connor] came and made it." Even Orsemus H. Irish, the gentile superintendent who took over Utah's Office of Indian Affairs in August 1864, noted Connor's deleterious influence on the Indians: "If the Military authorities will allow me to manage these Indians *without any further interference*," he wrote in November 1864, "I am satisfied . . . I can maintain peace."¹²⁶

¹²³ Anonymous and undated statement found in Secretary of Utah Territory Papers, TEP, USA, document #73.

¹²⁴ George F. Price, Adjutant General, Head Quarters of the Plains, to Lt. Col. Milo George, 13 June 1865, District of the Plains, Register of Letters received, Jan–Sept. 1865, in vol. 326, District of the Missouri, 37, RUSA, RG 393, pt. II, entry 3257.

¹²⁵ For contemporary descriptions of Connor's policy, see C.D. Waudell to General Connor, 20 June 1865, District of the Plains, Register of Letters received, Jan–Sept. 1865, in vol. 781, District of Missouri, 525–26, RUSA, pt. 2, entry 3257; and P. Edw. Connor, Brig. Genl., to Major W.W. Barnes, A.A. Genl, U.S. Forces Kansas and the Territories, 30 November and 5 December 1865, District of Utah, 1865–1866, Letters Sent, Oct. 1865–June 1866, no. 345/1st 850 District of Missouri, 11–13, 18–19, RUSA, RG 393, pt. 3, entry 824, RUSA.

¹²⁶ George A. Smith to John F. Kinney, 15 December 1863, HOLB, 2:291; and O.H. Irish to William P. Dole, 9 November 1864, BIA, M234, 901. *Italics mine.*

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¹²⁷ Memorial for President of the U 1864, in Amos Reed

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¹²⁹ Amos Reed

Problems created by the Indian Department, however, probably had even greater impact in encouraging the Indians to fight the Mormons than did the feisty anti-Mormon general. As has been noted, Brigham Young had established four small reservations called Indian Farms in the mid-1850s while he served as ex officio superintendent of Indian affairs. When gentiles took control of Indian affairs after the Utah War in 1858, the farms almost immediately plunged into disarray, and hungry Indians turned to nearby Mormon settlements for food. By 1864 the results of the farm failures were serious. The collapse drastically increased begging and tempted the Indians to justify their theft of Mormon stock, vegetables, and grain. The begging and theft on the part of the Indians resulted in retaliatory measures on the part of the Mormons, and animosity between the two groups increased. Finally, the Latter-day Saints viewed the closing of the farms and the establishment of a *distant* reservation as the answer to "the Indian problem," and they petitioned President Lincoln to vacate the farms and open them for settlement.¹²⁷

Assuming the Mormon request would be granted, gentile representatives of the Indian Office informed Indians that the farms would be sold and their inhabitants removed to a contemplated reservation in the Uinta Valley. Already aggravated that they were not involved in deciding their own fate, and resolving not to give up the farms, the Indians were even further excited when Mormon squatters began moving onto the farms. As a result of these tensions, Indians took shots at Mormons and wantonly killed cattle during the summer of 1864. Orson Hyde predicted that if things did not change "we must have an Indian War."¹²⁸ Some Mormons that summer actually called upon the troops at Camp Douglas to chastise the Indians, but acting superintendent Amos Reed viewed their requests as part of a Mormon scheme to stage an Indian war to keep gentile miners out of Utah. He therefore advised Connor "not to send out any soldiers."¹²⁹

These problems were greatly increased by other factors. The unwarranted fear that the Indians were under the absolute control of the Mormons worked to encourage Congress to limit the size of appropri-

¹²⁷ Memorial for the Vacation of Indian Reservations to His Excellency Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States from the Utah Territorial Legislature, approved 11 January 1864, in Amos Reed to John F. Kinney, 13 January 1864, BIA, M234, 901.

¹²⁸ Extensive correspondence in BIA, M234, 901; and Orson Hyde to Brigham Young, 10-16 June 1864, BYC.

¹²⁹ Amos Reed to William P. Dole, 8 June 1864, BIA, M234, 901.



Above: Artist's rendition of Joseph Smith telling Native Americans that the Book of Mormon is the record of their forefathers, translated from plates of gold and brought forth in the "latter days" to bring them back to Christ. Courtesy of CHD.

Right: Brigham Young, successor of Joseph Smith, led the LDS church from 1844 until his death in 1877. Courtesy of CHD.

